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A Study of the Meanings of Non-violence

GENE SHARP

'Non-violence', 'non-violent resistance', *'satyāgraha'* and 'pacifism' are words now frequently found in such newspapers as the *Manchester Guardian*, *The Times*, and the *New York Times*.

The Negroes of Montgomery, Alabama, conduct a year-long non-violent bus boycott. Danilo Dolci is jailed for leading hungry Sicilians in a non-violent demonstration. Jehovah's Witnesses continue to gain adherents to their creed, which includes refusal of military duty. The word 'pacifism' appears frequently in news reports from Germany.

The crew of the ketch *Golden Rule* go to prison for attempting to stop U.S. nuclear tests by sailing into the Pacific 'proving grounds'. The Welsh Nationalists use non-violent resistance in addition to educational and electoral methods in their struggle for Welsh self-government. Young Frenchmen begin their fifth year in prison as war resisters.

London newspapers headline the arrest of 45 opponents of nuclear weapons for civil disobedience in non-violently 'invading' a rocket base site in an effort to halt construction. In India, Vinobā Bhāve redistri-

* The first version of this article was a chapter of the writer's M.A. thesis in sociology : *Non-violence : A Sociological Study* (Ohio State University, 1951). A slightly popularised revision appeared in *Mankind* (Hyderābād), December 1956, under the title 'A Typology of Non-violence'. A pamphlet reprint of this, under the title *The Meaning of Non-violence*, was issued in 1957 by Housemans Bookshop, London. The writer then made several major changes and additions, included documentation and completely re-wrote the paper. This revision was published in the American *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, March 1959, under the title 'The Meanings of Non-violence : A Typology'. The present version is a further revision containing some new documentation, a more extensive introduction, and statements and descriptions illustrating the respective types of nonv-iolence within the text itself.

butes land by 'looting with love'. A Mennonite father refuses to send his children to an Ohio school because he believes they will be taught war-like and un-Godly ideas. Commander Sir Stephen King-Hall lectures to top British naval, army and air-force officers on 'The Alternative to the Nuclear Deterrent : Non-violent Resistance'. Women of Budapest stop Russian tanks by lying down in front of them.

Filmstar Don Murray, as a religious pacifist, helps resettle World War II refugees still without homes. South African 'Black Sash' women keep silent vigils to defend the Constitution. Hundreds in Britain march four days in rain, snow and sun to the Aldermaston Atomic Weapons Research Establishment in protest against nuclear weapons. The All-African Peoples' Conference in Accra pledges support for non-violent resistance, including civil disobedience, movements for the liberation of Africa.

Although almost everyone says the world must end war forever or be destroyed, the ideas and ideals of 'non-violence'[1] and methods of non-violent social action are still espoused by only minorities. But they have now risen to sufficient prominence that they must be reckoned with in world thinking and events. Gāndhī is in large degree responsible for this. The impact of 'non-violence', however, is now felt in many parts of the world and arises from diverse sources. This increased awareness of 'non-violence' has come despite (or because of) the fact that many of the ideas, ideals and methods of 'non-violence' run counter to established orthodoxies and socially approved behaviour. They also stand in contrast to modern developments of violence : totalitarianism and nuclear weapons.

Despite this growing awareness of 'non-violence' there is widespread confusion about just what 'non-violence' is. All the above examples and many more have been labelled with the terms 'non-violence' and 'pacifism'. This lack of clarity has had its effect on the groups promoting non-violent approaches, on criticisms by their opponents, and on the thinking of still others. The usual degree of misunderstanding which may result from a varied and imprecise use of terms becomes plain confusion when the phenomena concerned are relatively little known. When these phenomena include unorthodox ideas, beliefs and methods of resistance—each of which may be associated with strong emotions among both proponents and opponents—the confusion may become chaos.

1. 'Non-violence' in this paper refers to the absence of physical violence against human beings. Fuller definitions are offered in subsequent sections.

At first glance, all that is 'not violence' may seem to be of a single kind. In a society where such systems of ideas, beliefs and behaviour are usually regarded as esoteric, 'crack-pot', impractical, dangerous or simply strange, few people undertake a sufficiently serious examination of these phenomena to make them aware that quite different types of belief and behaviour are involved. 'Pacifism', 'passive resistance', 'non-violence' and the other terms are commonly used either as broad generalities (glittering, scathing or just vague) or with a wide variety of more specific meanings for the same word. A failure, however, to discern the very real differences among the various types of 'non-violence' and to exercise more care in the use of the terms may have a number of undesirable consequences. Two of these are that evaluation of the merits and demerits of these approaches will be seriously handicapped, and that research in this area will face unnecessary difficulties.

Persons rejecting violence on grounds of principle have rarely analysed the relation of their particular belief systems to others also rejecting violence. They have failed to do this largely because such analysis has seemed to them irrelevant : their duty was to follow the imperatives of their beliefs. However, some of them have recognized differences in motivation and behaviour among those rejecting violence.

For example, Guy F. Hershberger, a Mennonite, distinguishes between 'non-resistance' and 'modern pacifism'. Non-resistance, he says, describes the faith and life of those 'who cannot have any part in warfare because they believe the Bible forbids it, and who renounce all coercion, even non-violent coercion'. Pacifism, he says, is 'a term which covers many types of opposition to war'.[2]

Some Western pacifists[3] have seen Gāndhī's approach as sufficiently different from their own that they have felt it was not genuinely 'pacifist'. Reginald Reynolds writes : 'A reading of "official" [British] pacifist literature from, say, 1920 onwards would reveal some odd things which many pacifists would prefer to forget. People accepted as "leading pacifists" were, as late as 1930, writing abusive articles about Gāndhī and defending British Rule in India. Such articles and letters could be found in *The Friend* (weekly unofficial paper of the Quakers), in *Reconciliation* (monthly organ of the Fellowship of Reconciliation), and in *No More*

2. Hershberger, 'Biblical Non-resistance and Modern Pacifism', *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, July 1943 ; cited by Theodore Paullin, *Introduction to Non-violence* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Pacifist Research Bureau, 1944) p. 5.

3. 'Pacifists' here refers to persons and groups refusing participation in war on ethical, moral or religious grounds.

War (the monthly organ of the [No More War] movement)'.[4]

Western pacifists have sometimes distinguished between the 'religious' pacifists and the 'non-religious' pacifists who base their pacifism on 'humanitarian' or 'philosophical' considerations. This distinction has also been made by non-pacifists.[5] Pacifists have also recognized differences among themselves in their response to military conscription. There have been : (a) the 'absolutists' who believe in civil disobedience to such laws and refuse coöperation with the administrative agencies for military conscription even to obtain their personal exemption from military duty where the law allows for such exemption ; (b) those who refuse entry into the armed forces (even as non-combatants) but are willing to coöperate with the conscription system to obtain their exemption from military duty and are willing to perform alternative civilian work where such alternative is allowed ; and (c) those who refuse to bear arms but are willing to perform non-combatant (e.g. medical) duties within the armed forces.[6]

Although Gāndhī never wrote systematic treatises on 'non-violence', he did distinguish between two or more types of 'non-violence'.[7] After first calling his South African protest movements 'passive resistance', he discarded the term and adopted a new term, *satyāgraha*.[8] 'When in a meeting of Europeans I found that the term "passive resistance" was too narrowly construed, that it was supposed to be a weapon of the weak, that it could be characterized by hatred, and that it could finally manifest itself as violence, I had to demur to all these statements and explain the real nature of the Indian movement. It was clear that a new word must be coined by the Indians to designate their struggle'.[9] Gāndhī also seems to have assumed an implicit distinction between Western pacifism and *satyāgraha*, although explicit statements to this effect are difficult to find. Bharatan Kumārappā, in an introductory note to a small collection

4. Reynolds, 'What Are Pacifists Doing ?', *Peace News* (London), 20 July 1956.

5. For example, the U.S. conscription law provides for alternatives to military duty for those objecting to it because of religious belief and training, but denies such alternatives to objectors whose pacifism arises from a personal philosophy, humanitarianism, or social, economic or political views.

6. Military conscription laws throughout the world vary concerning provisions for objectors. Many make no provisions for exemption from military duty or alternative civilian duty. Some include either or both provisions for objectors establishing their sincerity. Still others provide either or both provisions only for certain objectors, such as 'religious' ones.

7. As will be indicated below, the term 'non-violence' is used in a much broader sense in this paper than it was by Gāndhī.

8. *Satyāgraha* will be defined below.

9. M. K. Gāndhī, *The Story of My Experiments With Truth* (Ahmedābād, Navajīvan Publishing House, 1956) p. 318.

of Gāndhī's writings prepared for the World Pacifist Conference in India, December 1949—January 1950, writes : 'It is a far cry . . . from pacifism to Gāndhījī's idea of non-violence. While pacifism hopes to get rid of war chiefly by refusing to fight and by carrying on propaganda against war, Gāndhījī goes much deeper and sees that war cannot be avoided, so long as the seeds of it remain in man's breast and grow and develop in his social, political and economic life. Gāndhījī's cure is, therefore, very radical and far-reaching. It demands nothing less than rooting out violence from oneself and from one's environment.'[10]

The American sociologist Clarence Marsh Case in his study of such phenomena explicitly recognises differences between various types,[11] although he makes no attempt to devolop a typology. He uses the terms 'non-violent resistance' and 'passive resistance' interchangeably.[12]

Political scientist Dr Mulford Sibley has distinguished three types of 'non-violence' : Hindu pacifism (*satyāgraha*), Christian pacifism, and revolutionary secular pacifism.[13] This classification, however, did not purport to encompass the field of 'non-violence' and was limited to those modern types of pacifism containing political theory. Professor Leo Kuper of the Sociology Department of Natal University has distinguished between non-violent resistance movements aimed at achieving their goals by means of embarrassment and conversion of their opponents respectively ;[14] but, again, this does not purport to be a full typology.

Theodore Paullin[15] comes close to developing a typology of 'non-violence', although this was not his main intention. Paullin structured his discussion on the basis of six types resulting from a continuum 'at one end of which we place violence coupled with hatred, and at the other, dependence only upon the application of positive love and goodwill. In the intermediate positions we might place (1) violence without hatred, (2) non-violence practised by necessity rather than because of principle, (3) non-violent coercion, (4) *satyāgraha* and non-violent direct action, and (5) non-resistance.'[16] The non-violence extremity of his continuum,

10. Kumārappā, 'Editor's Note' in Gāndhī, *For Pacifists* (Ahmedābād, Navajīvan Publishing House, 1949).

11. Case, *Non-violent Coercion : A Study in Methods of Social Pressure*, (New York, The Century Company, 1923) p. 287.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

13. Sibley, *The Political Theories of Modern Pacifism : An Analysis and Criticism* (Philadelphia, Pacifist Research Bureau, 1944).

14. See Kuper, *Passive Resistance in South Africa* (London, Jonathan Cape, 1956) pp. 75-94.

15. *Op. cit.*

16. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

'active goodwill and reconciliation', becomes the sixth type. Because Paullin's main objective in the booklet was to consider the application of 'non-violent means of achieving group purposes'[17] his classification has suffered through lack of development and refinement. Some types of 'non-violence' have not been included,[18] and some seem classified incorrectly.[19] Paullin has, however, made a genuine contribution towards developing a typology.

Generic Non-Violence

The whole gamut of behaviour and belief characterized by an abstention from physical violence is hereafter described by the term 'generic non-violence'. This is the sense in which the term 'non-violence' has been hitherto used in this paper.[20] 'Generic non-violence' thus includes a wide variety of types of 'non-violence' : all the examples briefly listed in the opening section of this paper and more. These vary widely on several points, such as whether 'non-violence' is viewed as intrinsically good or simply as an effective method of action, the degree of passivity and activity, the presence or absence of strategy, and whether the followers of the approach are 'other worldly' or 'this worldly'. These phenomena have in common only the abstention from physical violence, either generally or in meeting particular conflict situations, or both. Not included in this broad classification are : (1) hermits and (2) cases of cowardice (both involving a *de facto* withdrawal, though for different reasons, from aspects of life involving physical violence rather than the offering of a non-violent response in the situation) ; and (3) legislation, State decrees, etc., (backed by threat of physical violence, as imprisonment, execution, etc.).

Pacifism

The term 'pacifism' as here defined, includes the belief systems of those persons and groups who, as a minimum, refuse participation in all international or civil wars or violent revolutions and base this refusal on

17. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

18. For example, non-violent resistance with mixed motives of principle and expediency, and groups rejecting international wars but not necessarily personal violence.

19. For example, including William Lloyd Garrison's approach under *'satyāgraha* and non-violent direct action'.

20. 'Generic non-violence' and 'non-violence' for the purposes of this typology have thus a much broader meaning than that given to 'non-violence' by Gāndhī and certain other votaries of non-violence. Gāndhī often referred to non-violence as being essentially the same as love. It was *ahimsā*, which involved non-injury in thought, word and deed to all living things. It rejected ill-will and hatred as well as physical violence. For clarity, the new term 'generie non-violence' will be used hereafter in this paper, now that the subject area has been introduced.

moral, ethical or religious principle. Such persons and groups are here called 'pacifists'. 'Pacifism' is thus a narrower term than 'generic non-violence', and is an intermediary classification including several of the types of generic non-violence described below. These are indicated below after the typology.

Non-Violent Resistance and Direct Action

'Non-violent resistance and direct action' is another intermediary classification, being both narrower than 'generic non-violence' and broader than the specific types. The methods of 'non-violent resistance and direct action' fall on a continuum between personal exemplary behaviour and verbal persuasion at one end and sabotage and physical violence at the other.

'Non-violent resistance and direct action' refers to those methods of resistance and direct action without physical violence in which the members of the non-violent group perform either (1) *acts of omission*—that is, they refuse to perform acts which they usually perform, and are expected by custom to perform, *or* are required by law or regulation to perform ; or (2) *acts of commission*—that is, they insist on performing acts which they usually do not perform, are not expected by custom to perform, *or* are forbidden by law or regulation from performing ; or (3) *both*.

These methods are 'extra-constitutional' : that is, they do not rely upon established procedures of the State (whether parliamentary or non-parliamentary) for achieving their objective. Such acts may be directed towards a change in, or abolition of, existing attitudes, values, social patterns, customs or social structure, or a combination of these. Such change or abolition may take place whether these attitudes etc. are of the society as a whole or of only a section of it. Such acts may also be directed, in defence of attitudes, values, social patterns, customs, or social structure, or a combination of these, against attempts of the opponent to alter or to abolish them, whether by the introduction of particular or general innovations or both.

In some cases of non-violent resistance and direct action the primary intent is to change attitudes and values as a preliminary to changing policies. In other cases, the primary intent is to change policies (or thwart attempts to change policies) whether or not the opponents have first changed their attitudes and values. In other cases, the intent may be to change simultaneously attitudes and policies. Included in 'non-

violent resistance and direct action' are those cases where violence has been rejected because of (1) religious, ethical or moral reasons ; (2) considerations of expediency ; and (3) mixed motivations of various types. Where the behaviour of the non-violent group is primarily *resistance*, usually acts of omission, it can be described simply as 'non-violent resistance'. Where the behaviour of the non-violent group is primarily *intervention*, usually acts of commission, it can be described as 'non-violent direct action'.[21] The types of generic non-violence which are included in the category 'non-violent resistance and direct action'[22] are indicated below following the typology.

The Types of Generic Non-Violence

In developing this typology, the writer has sought to observe the 'natural' groupings or types as they seem to exist, rather than pre-selecting certain criteria and then seeking to fit the phenomena into the pre-determined categories. After a classification of the types had been made, the writer sought to examine what were the intrinsic characteristics possessed by the respective types which distinguish them from the others. The criteria which emerged include such factors as whether the motivation for non-violence is expediency, principle, or mixed ; whether the non-violent group's belief system is 'other worldly' or 'this worldly' ; whether or not the non-violent group has a program of social change ; what is the non-violent group's attitude towards the opponents ; whether all or only some physical violence is rejected ; whether the non-violent group is concerned with its own integrity ; and others. Following the description of the types of generic non-violence, appears a chart listing the main criteria which emerged.

The nine types of generic non-violence described below are : non-resistance, active reconciliation, moral resistance, selective non-violence, passive resistance, peaceful resistance, non-violent direct action, *satyā-*

21. 'Non-violent direct action' is discussed as a type of generic non-violence below in the typology.

22. This classification is similar to Hiller's category, the 'generic strike' : 'This [the generic strike] includes the labour strike, the social boycott, political non-cooperation, demonstrations against official acts, and other similar group conflicts. These various forms of non-participation, although differing in the occasions from which they arise and the ends which they seek, are essentially similar in their methods of coercion and collective control.' (E.T. Hiller, *The Strike : A Study in Collective Action*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1928, p. 41.) 'Non-participation which is designed to interfere with official acts most frequently takes the form of a refusal to share in the prescribed institutional activities or to participate in political affairs. Occasionally it may involve a suspension of labour.' (*Ibid.*, p. 234.)

graha, and non-violent revolution.[23],[24] These are listed roughly in the order of increasing activity.[25] *There are no strict separations between some of these types, and particular cases may not seem to fit exactly into any one of them.* This classification should be viewed simply as a *tool* to facilitate understanding and study of the phenomena, a tool which is neither perfect nor final, but may nevertheless be useful.

The examples cited and statements used as illustrations for the respective types have been chosen from those available to the writer on the basis of their adequacy as illustrations and because of the presence of suitable documentation. There is no pretence that the examples cited are geographically representative or exhaustive of the cases belonging to each type. Further research on each of these types could provide abundant additional examples and illustrative statements.

[To be continued]

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23. There is no type labelled 'conscientious objection' or 'war resistance', as such objection or resistance is a specific application of several of the types of generic non-violence included here.

24. In this revision the writer has tried to offer terminology and definitions which, if adopted, might reduce future confusion in the literature. This has involved making refinements in the existing terminology while seeking to use such terms in ways harmonious with present general usage. Hence, the broader, intermediary classes of 'pacifism' and 'non-violent resistance and direct action'. Hence, also, the use of the terms 'non-resistance', 'passive resistance', *satyāgraha* and 'non-violent revolution' in ways having clear precedents (although the writer is aware the first two have also been widely used with varying connotations). It has seemed necessary to coin new terms, such as 'generic non-violence', and 'selective non-violence' and to give more specific meanings to 'moral resistance' and 'peaceful resistance'. The writer does not regard this terminology as perfect, but in the absence of an alternative suggests its adoption. The final solution to the terminological problem may lie in creating entirely new terms, such as Gāndhī did with *satyāgraha* ; the difficulties in gaining their general acceptance, however, might be greater than those of accepting the terms and definitions offered in this paper.

25. This order is inevitably somewhat arbitrary ; the most active expression of one type may exceed in activity the most passive expression of the type(s) listed after it.